

# Testimony in Support of Raised House Bill No. 5300

## An Act Concerning the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms in Childrens' Food.

Submitted by: Pamela Arifian,  
Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ

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Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children,

I am Pamela Arifian, and I serve as the Director of the United Church of Christ (UCC) Northeast Environmental Justice Center, which is located in Sharon, CT. The Center is a ministry of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC.

I am writing on behalf of the 240 churches in the Connecticut Conference of the UCC (CTUCC), which includes approximately 73,000 people in our state's churches. The UCC is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. In 2012, the CTUCC supported a resolution to learn about the health, environmental and ethical concerns surrounding the production and consumption of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and two years later supported a follow-up resolution of witness supporting the labeling of GMOs on food packaging.

As a person of faith who reveres the divinity of Creation, I am concerned about the lack of responsibility exercised in the food industry with respect to genetically modified organisms. We do not know the long-term health consequences of consuming these foods, or on the ecosystems of which they are a part. The increased use of GMOs in our foods over the last few decades has dramatically increased the use of increasingly potent pesticides, which has had a disastrous effect on our pollinator species, including bees. I am concerned for our biodiversity and ability to produce healthy food.

As a gardener, I respect soil ecology and understand the importance of abundant nutrients, organic matter and microbiotic activity in creating nutritious foods. Many GMO foods are nutritionally compromised, given that they have herbicides in their genetic material, and call for the increased topical application of herbicides as well, which compromises the health of the soil biome, and thus, the nutrient content in the foods.

As a health advocate, a human being who relies on food, and a parent who wishes to provide for healthy, vital bodies in my household, I want to know what is in my food. I know that the human gut is a complex biome, and that ingesting pesticides and herbicides disrupts the delicate balance upon which good health is hinged. I also

understand that our youngest members of our society are the most vulnerable to disease, poor development and complications related to poor nutrition.

Therefore, I urge the Committee on Children to support Raised House Bill 5300, which, if adopted, would require the labeling of genetically modified organisms on children's foods.

Thank you for your work, and the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 5300.

Respectfully Submitted,

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